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3rd Legislative District

January 21, 2011

Remembering the Legacy of Two Great Leaders

In these times of unprecedented economic downturn and heightened political partisanship, it is important to step back and remember our visionary leaders who with words and actions have inspired us to come together to fight injustice and pursue the common good. This past Monday we honored Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. who gave his life in the pursuit of equality and justice for all. His memory challenges us to continue to stand up and fight for basic human rights. I was privileged to co-sponsor a Senate Resolution honoring Dr. King which can be read [here](#). I find myself reflecting on his legacy as the legislature faces tough choices around the budget and potential cuts of services to our most vulnerable citizens. We also took time Thursday to remember the 50th Anniversary of John F. Kennedy's "Ask Not" speech. Even in these difficult times, we are reminded of the call to service, the call to give back to our community and "what together we can do."

Pictured below: Senator Brown meeting with the Race and Social Justice Community Roundtable on Martin Luther King, Jr. Day.



Spokane's vigilance averted disaster

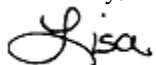
After coming together on Martin Luther King Day for our annual Unity March celebration, Spokane remains united in condemning the attempted attack on our community during our display of unity and peace. With thousands of people attending the parade, the thwarted bomb attack was a very real attempt to cause injury. The bomb was a sophisticated one, and was placed strategically to explode in a way that would maximize casualties. This kind of attempted violence has no place in our community or any community, and deserves to be denounced in the strongest of terms. But despite Monday's horrifying news, a number of positive things have emerged from this scare. Spokane responded quickly, exercising the utmost caution. Two alert individuals noticed a suspicious backpack, and notified the police. The police quickly rerouted the parade, and called in the bomb squad to disarm the bomb using a robot. Meanwhile, the thousands of Spokaneites celebrating the peaceful legacy of one of our greatest champions of social justice and civil rights were in no way disrupted. No one was harmed. The parade went on. The system worked. All involved deserve our thanks and should be commended.

While it's hard for many of us to understand the motivations of someone who attempts to carry out this kind of attack, we can all celebrate Spokane's vigilance and the swift and responsive manner in which members of our community took action to keep the community safe. And what a parade! I was in Olympia for the second week of the 2011 legislative session and so didn't get to attend – but, thanks to series of fantastic pictures online I viewed, I almost feel like I was there.

Protecting the Spokane River with the Green Lawns, Clean Water Bill

On Tuesday my seatmate Representative Andy Billig was the prime sponsor of [House Bill 1271](#) commonly referred to as the “**Green Lawns, Clean Water Bill.**” This bill would limit phosphorous in commercial lawn fertilizers. A similar bill was introduced last year, but didn't make it all the way through the Legislature before the end of the 2010 Legislative Session. I want to see it go all the way to the Governor's desk this year and have signed on to a companion bill [SB 5194](#) that was introduced Tuesday as well in the Senate. Phosphorous in fertilizers rarely penetrates the soil, and instead runs directly into our waterways, such as Long Lake and the Spokane River – where one pound of phosphorous can create up to 500 pounds of harmful blue-green algae. The bill includes exceptions for phosphate application, such as when seeding a new lawn or agricultural purposes. Good, lake- and river-friendly alternatives already exist, and our Green Lawns, Clean Water bill will help make both them and phosphorous-free waterways the standard throughout the state. The problem of toxic algae blooms is one facing other states as well. Limiting phosphorus in fertilizer is an economical solution with proven results. I applaud Representative Billig for demonstrating such strong leadership in just his second week in the Legislature to ensure our region's most valuable environmental resource is protected.

Sincerely,



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